

International Shopping Plaza Concept Design

Competition for Professionals

Design Program

COMPETITION THEME: Commerce Changes Cities

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Nexus of Experience and Interaction
A Program to Design a 21st Century Shopping Plaza

"To be in need is to possess."
- Lao Tzu, Tao Te Ching

The 21st Century City is poised for a total transformation of the "shopping mall", and consequently of the entire idea of public interaction, desire and commerce.

Such a radical transformation requires correlatively the transformation of physical space, represented by the so called "shopping mall". I have put the words "shopping mall" in quotes because we have already seen the blurring and erasure of old categories which separated shopping from leisure, entertainment, and public festivities. This separation is a consequence, not only of technology, but of human perception which is opening up new frontiers. New forms of anticipation and fulfillment arrive at the fore.

The aim of this competition is to produce a holistic, physical space that contains all of the possibilities for shopping, entertainment, leisure and being—in any form that can communicate practical, pragmatic and economically achievable solutions. These solutions must be implemented and built in a sustainable, innovative spirit.

So what could one envision for the shopping mall or public plaza of the 21st century? Is the new mall a microcosm of the human mind, whose unlimited complexity combined with individual choice resonate in harmony with others? Can such a space be more than an illusionistic stage on which shops offer their wares and food and beverage is available as it is on the streets? Can such a space promote greater levels of self-fulfillment and communal identity by providing both intimacy and grandeur; both an individual experience and an atmosphere which elevates the individual towards imagination, participation and creativity.

Just like the 21st Century city, the modern plaza is centered on the passion for creative transformation and intense metamorphosis. This space—no longer bound by the over simplified functionalist notions of connectivity—can create a field of experience which is multi-dimensional and interdisciplinary. It is in this way, the great traditions of public space, the market, desire and fulfillment are connected to our present—which creates a future that is both unexpected and compelling.

Beyond designing spaces, shop-front, natural and artificial light...One must bring a powerful new notion of nature, both animate and inanimate, which will infuse the shopping plaza with a fantastic sense of joy, discovery and wonder. One of the ways to delve into this problem is to look into the history of public spaces. Walter Benjamin has described in his *Arcades Project* the technological, commercial, societal and artistic dimensions of the development of the 19th century capital: Paris.

Perhaps the 21st century capital needs to discover its own heritage. This heritage is not only to be found in existing typologies and obvious requirements and needs. To give accessibility to everyone from the lonely individual, to families, young people, children, the elderly, tourists and visitors, one needs to develop an integrated program, which includes all of the arts.

While virtual shopping has counted its own successes recently, there is a need to re-affirm the sense of community engagement with people, face to face. It is the core of the longevity of all spaces that are meaningful. One might use virtual technologies but for a different purpose: to show the magic of the material world and the aura of being able to access things with all of the senses. The participants in this competition are therefore asked to find new forms of engagement and enjoyment—for a new light, a new stage, and a new focus on the vividness of everyday life, imbued with concrete success.

My suggestion is that teams could be formed, which, beyond architects and planners, include philosophers, artists and economists—in order to address the core value of the space: total immersive experience, available to all. The form of response in terms of drawings, models, films, books, installations, choreographies...is completely open to all participants. This is a quest for originality and artistic creativity, based on scientific and poetic criteria.

I wish the participants fun, intellectually challenging discourse, and a dialogue that includes all people equally.

Daniel Libeskind

Written in Berlin, Germany on Sunday, November 15th 2015

Design requirements: Site, functions and volume: custom